REMARKS

The Office Action mailed October 6 , 2003, has been carefully reviewed and by this Amendment, Applicant has canceled claim 5, amended claims 1, 3, 6-8 and 10, and added claims 12-14. Claims 1-4 and 6-14 are pending.

The Examiner rejected claims 3-7, 10 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. By this Amendment, Applicant has corrected the indefiniteness in claims 3 and 10, and has canceled claim 5. Favorable reconsideration of the pending claims is requested.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,473,664 to Lee et al. ("Lee") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,432,715 to Shigematsu et al. ("Shigematsu"). The Examiner also discussed U.S. Patent No. 6,054,987 to Richardson in connection with the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

As set forth in amended claim 1, as well as new claim 12, the present invention provides a semiconductor factory automation (FA) system capable of monitoring, in real-time, each processor coupled to semiconductor equipments, respectively, and, as set forth in claim 8, a method for monitoring the server in the semiconductor FA system. Through such real-time monitoring of the operational state of one or more processors, the present invention is able to prevent associated semiconductor wafers from being inappropriately processed in the semiconductor equipment when the processor coupled to the semiconductor equipment is in an error state. This is not shown by the prior art.

Lee is directed to a manufacturing process automation system with centralized storage of job result data within a file server so that a plurality of machines coupled to the server can access and share the job result data. As acknowledged by the Examiner, there is no monitoring of processors coupled to semiconductor equipments, nor display of status information relating to the processors, disclosed or suggested in Lee.

Shigematsu discloses a computer system capable of monitoring such system in real time without limiting the length of each monitor message by providing a monitoring means to each computer in the computer system, respectively, so that, even if a number of monitor messages are received at the same time from a plurality of computers, a delay in message reception does not occur. Thus, Shigematsu efficiently processes a plurality of monitor messages by providing a monitoring computer to each computer. This is unlike the monitoring means in accordance with the present invention which provides real-time monitoring of the processors coupled to semiconductor equipment in order to prevent inappropriate processing by such equipment due to the processors being in an error state or being otherwise unavailable. To find that it would have been obvious to modify Lee to include the monitoring capability of Shigematsu requires reliance on Applicant's own disclosure of such a monitoring capability, which is improper. Furthermore, Richardson does not teach or suggest a real-time processor monitoring system in connection with semiconductor processing equipment and therefore does not provide the teaching that is lacking in Lee and Shigematsu.

Thus, for at least the foregoing reasons, claims 1, 8 and 12 are patentable over the prior art. Claims 2-4, 6, 7, 9-11, 13 and 14 are also in condition for allowance as claims properly

dependent on an allowable base claim and for the subject matter contained therein. Favorable consideration is requested.

With this Amendment, the application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, the Examiner is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned attorney so that the present application can receive an early Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

JACOBSON HOLMAN PLLC

By _____
Yoon S. Ham
Reg. No. 45,307

400 Seventh Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004
Telephone: (202) 638-6666
Date: January 6, 2004
YSH:SCB